

REMARKS

Claims 1-17, 19, and 20 remain pending. Claim 16 has been amended merely to correct an informality. The Examiner is thanked for his courtesy during a telephonic discussion on 30 June 2003. The following includes a summary of this discussion, as well as a response to the Final Office Action.

The Examiner has objected to claim 16 because of an informality. Claim 16 has been amended to correct this informality.

Rejection of Claims under §103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-4, 7-8, 11-12, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Runaldue et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,108,726) in view of Hoang (U.S. Patent No. 6,108,726). The Examiner has also rejected claims 5-6, 9-10, 13-14, 15, and 17-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Runaldue et al. in view of Huong and in further view of Chow et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,169,742). The rejections are respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 is directed towards a "method of communicating between a media access control layer and a physical layer." Claim 1 also requires "sending a plurality of time-division multiplexed receive control signals on a receive control line" and "sending a plurality of time-division multiplexed transmit control signals on a transmit control line." Claim 1 also requires "wherein the receive control signals include a receive data valid signal and a receive error signal and the transmit control signals include a transmit enable signal and a transmit error signal." Independent claim 15 is directed towards an "interface between a first media access control layer and a second media access control layer." Claim 15 also requires "a time-division multiplexed receive control line for transmitting different functional types of receive control signals including a receive data valid signal and a receive error signal" and "a time-division multiplexed transmit control line for transmitting different functional types of transmit control signals including a transmit enable signal and a transmit error signal." Independent claim 16 has similar elements. In other words, the receive data valid signal is received on the same line as the receive error signal. Likewise, the transmit enable signal is transmitted on the same line as the transmit error signal.

The cited references fails to teach or suggest receiving the receive data valid signal *on the same control line* as the receive error signal. Likewise, the cited references fail to teach or suggest transmitting the transmit enable signal *on the same control line* as the transmit error

signal. In contrast, the cited references teach signals that are received and transmitted on *different* control lines.

In his Office Action of 5 May 2003, the Examiner admits that the primary reference does not teach the receive error signal being on the same control line as the receive data valid signal or the transmit error signal being on the same control line as the transmit error signal. (Page 7, 2nd Paragraph). The Examiner cites the secondary reference Huong for teaching these features. However, it is respectfully submitted that Huong fails to teach or suggest a receive data valid signal which shares the same line as a receive error signal or a transmit enable signal which shares the same line as the transmit error signal. Within the portion of Huong cited by the Examiner, Huong teaches that these signals are on different pins: "the repeater module 514 handles 13 MII ports, but includes only a single MII data port with a single set of RXD<3:0> and TXD<3:0> data pins, one TX ER pin..., one RX_ER..., 13 TX_EN pins..." In other words, the signals of Huong are taught as being on separate pins. During our telephonic conversation, the Examiner asserted that having these types of signals on a same line (*i.e.*, transmit enable and transmit error on the same line; receive data valid signal and receive error on the same line) is well known and may be found in the prior art. The Examiner is respectfully requested to find a prior art reference which teaches such limitations.

In sum, the cited references Runaldue et al. and Huong fail to teach or suggest receiving the receive data valid signal *on the same control line* as the receive error signal and transmitting the transmit enable signal *on the same control line* as the transmit error signal, in the manner claimed. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 15, and 16 are patentable over the cited reference.

The Examiner's rejections of the dependent claims are also respectfully traversed. However, to expedite prosecution, all of these claims will not be argued separately. Claims 2-14, 17, and 19-20 depend directly or indirectly from independent claims 1 or 16 and, therefore, are respectfully submitted to be patentable over cited art for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claims 1 or 16. Further, the dependent claims require additional elements that when considered in context of the claimed inventions further patentably distinguish the invention from the cited art.

Applicant believes that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

Respectfully submitted,
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